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ABSTRACT

A study was designed to assist elementary music teachers to create and/or improve methods of assessment for fifth-grade beginning band students. It was conducted from August to December 2002 and included 13 volunteer participants from a rapidly growing student population at an Illinois elementary school. As part of the research process, surveys, reflection logs, and anecdotal records were used to document the extent of the problem and the possible influence of the intervention. Both at the state and national levels, music teachers have increased their focus on assessing student performance, because of the current emphasis on standards. Developing assessment methods can be a challenge for music teachers, so new assessment methods that enabled teachers to use multiple intelligences and authentic procedures were explored. According to A. C. Brualdi (1998) and many other professionals in the field, teachers can integrate performance-based assessments into the instructional process to provide additional learning experiences for the students. Considering this, the researchers implemented two solution strategies: (1) incorporating the multiple intelligences perspective into classroom instruction (student portfolios, student section leaders, composition project, and use of videotapes); and (2) including a formal grading system with authentic assessments. While most solution strategies were successful in monitoring student achievement, some methods succumbed to the obstacles of time constraints, class size, and various levels of student experience. Appendixes contain: parent and student surveys, teacher reflection, two log forms, anecdotal records, composition rubric, performance critique sheet, teacher checklist, and grade report. (Contains 2 figures, 2 tables, and 28 references.) (Author/BT)

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DEVELOPING AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT METHODS FROM A MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES PERSPECTIVE

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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to assist elementary music teachers with creating and/or improving methods of assessment for fifth beginning band students. The study was conducted from August to December 2002 and included 13 volunteer participants from a rapidly growing student population at an elementary school in Illinois. As a part of research process, surveys reflection logs, and anecdotal records were used to document the extent of the problem and the possible influence of the intervention.

Both at the state and national level, music teachers have increased their focus on assessing student performances (Burke, 1999; Lehman, 1997). It is an important topic today because of the current emphasis on standards (Brophy, 2000). According to Lehman (1997), many schools are abandoning the traditional letter grade and providing another form of assessment that more accurately reflects the ability and performance level of students. Developing these assessment methods can be a challenge for music teachers due to factors such as class size, time, and various levels of student experience (Brasher, 1999). Based on this, the researchers explored new assessment methods that enabled teachers to use multiple intelligences and authentic procedures.

According to Brualdi (1998) and many other professionals in the field, teachers can integrate performance-based assessments into the instructional process to provide additional learning experiences for the students. Considering this, the researchers implemented two solution strategies: incorporating the multiple intelligences perspective into classroom instruction (i.e. student portfolios, student section leaders, composition project, and the use of videotapes); and included a formal grading system with authentic assessments.

While most solution strategies were successful in monitoring student achievement, some methods succumbed to the obstacles of time constraints, class size, and various levels of student experience.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

Both at the state and national level, music teachers have increased their focus on assessing student performances (Burke 1999, Lehman 1997). As a result of current practice, the music teachers in the targeted elementary schools (hereinafter referred to as Site A and Site B) worked to establish and/or improve methods of assessment and procedures for providing feedback on students' performance to parents. Specifically, this study was designed to assist the researcher at Site A with creating an assessment program for use in a fifth grade band class. The researcher at Site B assisted in this endeavor and utilized the planning process to improve methods currently employed in a fifth grade general music class. As a part of the research process, surveys, reflection logs, and anecdotal records were used to document the extent of the problem and the possible influence of the intervention. The intervention included a formal grading system using authentic assessments based on a multiple intelligences perspective (Gardner, 1993).

Immediate Problem Context

The research conducted at Site A consisted of grades 3-5. The total number of students at Site A was 875, which included 336 third grade students, 278 fourth grade students, and 261 fifth grade students.

At the time of the study, the average years of teaching experience at Site A was seven years, and there were 41 classroom teachers and 15 teacher specialists. Of the 56 teachers noted, 52 are female and four are male. The building administration consisted of one principal, one assistant principal, and three wing leaders.

The entire facility at Site A is divided into three wings, each consisting of four classrooms from each grade level. Rather than designating each hallway to a specific grade level, the set-up described created less walking time for the younger students. The band room is located near the center of the building to allow equal walking distance for all fifth grade band students.

The research for this study was conducted specifically at Site A. However, band students from Site B also received the interventions even though they did not participate in the study. There were 185 fifth grade students enrolled in the band program throughout the district during the data collection. Of this number, 131 were from Site A and 54 were from Site B. The band students at both sites met once a week for a 30-minute full-band rehearsal and a 30-minute small group lesson.

Rapid growth in the district has created a demand for new classes and more programs for students. During the 2002-2003 school year, the district hired an experienced string teacher to implement and develop an orchestra program, which will allow fourth grade students to learn a string instrument. The program is structured to include grades 4-12 by the year 2010.

The Surrounding Community

By the year 2005, there will be an estimated population of 15,000 people in the surrounding community (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The town has a high population of senior

citizens due to a new retirement community. Based on current trends, rapid escalation in new housing development is expected to increase student enrollment by 25%-30% per year.

The targeted school district is in one of the fastest growing counties in the state. The district operates seven school buildings on two campuses. Out of this growth comes a need to continually pass new referendums. The community has been very supportive thus far by providing financial aide for new schools and additions to existing buildings.

The school district is governed by a seven-member board of education. The administrative staff in the district includes one superintendent, four assistant superintendents, five principals, and five assistant principals.

The participants of this study attended a unit district that hosted students from grades pre-kindergarten through twelve. As of September 30, 2000 enrollment in the district was 3,188. The cultural background of the students is 86.8% White, 1.9% Black, 7.2% Hispanic, 3.9% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.3% Native American. The percentage of low-income families was 3.5%. The average district-wide attendance rate was 95.5% (Combined Report Card, 2001).

The total number of teachers district-wide was 197, of which 74.8 % have their bachelors degree and 25.2% have a masters degree and above. Of the 197 teachers, 23.4% are men and 76.6% are women. The average teaching experience was seven years. Because of rapid growth, many new teachers are employed each year. The district also works diligently to maintain a positive mix of new and experienced teachers.

National Context of the Problem

Assessment is an important topic today throughout the field of education (Lashway, 1999). Teachers are held more accountable for what and how they teach their students. At one time, principals and teachers could satisfy the demands of accountability simply by working hard

and following accepted professional standards. Today, content standards are established, student progress is tested, and professional development is aligned with standards and test results.

National, state, and local standards require assessment. Without assessment, it's impossible to know whether or not standards have been achieved (Lehman, 1997). Music students in grades K-8 are expected to show competency in nine national content standards (Consortium, 1994). The Consortium enumerated the nine national content standards as follows:

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
5. Reading and notating music
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
7. Evaluating music and music performances
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture (p. 26).

The question that many music educators today seem to be asking is "How do we assess students' competency in these content areas?" (MENC, 1996). Some music educators believe that music teaching and learning are very difficult, if not impossible to assess. We know that all learning in music cannot be measured with traditional testing instruments and techniques (Aiming For Excellence, p.28). It is up to us, therefore, to continue our investigation of new and innovative strategies for assessing student achievement.

Some educators today are using Gardner's multiple intelligences theory in their daily instructional units and assessment procedures (Burke, 1999). Gardner's theory states that people possess several different capabilities for creating products and solving problems. This approach allows teachers to use cooperative learning, high-order thinking, portfolios, performance tasks, and rubrics more in their individual classrooms. According to Gardner (1993) assessments should be intelligence-fair and not have to rely completely on linguistic or logical means.

The traditional method of assessment, based on student performance, often fails to address the skills of listening, performing, and creating that are involved in learning music (Carlin, 1996). With traditional assessment, grades and student feedback are given after a performance is already completed. This does not allow the teacher to assist the student with their learning or allow the student to make necessary changes in what they are doing. Therefore, it is up to the music teacher to find accurate and relevant means of assessing their students.

According to Bowers, Davis, Edwards, Fodor, Keenan-Takagi, LaCroix, and Polancich (n.d.), "we are not alone in our quest for new assessment procedures" (p.149). Educators in many subjects are also studying this important issue. Bowers et al further noted that in language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics, teachers are implementing new testing methods, which have come to be called alternative assessment or performance-based assessment. In a performance-based assessment, students generate their own responses to a prompt, or demonstrate their knowledge and skill through performance.

Development and implementation of performance-based assessments allows for the use of standards-based grading (Lehman, 1997). The alternative to standards-based grading is to accept the premise that music lacks specific skills and knowledge to be taught and learned. Unfortunately, many music teachers have relied heavily on such nonmusical factors as

attendance, effort, and attitude when assigning grades. In order to send the right message to parents and the community at large, teachers need to acknowledge that music performance can be graded on specific skills and reported in a standards-based grading system. Teachers need to find better ways of assessing students, and they need to find more clear and accurate ways of reporting to parents the content of their student's grade. Lehman also states that teachers need to display their students' grades with the knowledge that some parents may contend that it is unfair to give their children anything less than high grades in music.

A clear grade-reporting method may eliminate the common misconception that achievement in music is based on talent rather than effort (Lehman, 1997). Implementing this grading method would allow parents and students to see that student grades are based on a series of clear musical standards that each student must achieve.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

As a result of current practice, the music teachers in the targeted elementary schools worked to established and/or improve methods of assessment and procedures for providing feedback to parents on students' performance. Evidence for the existence of the problem included surveys, reflection logs, and anecdotal records. The results from the Student Surveys and the Parent Surveys collected during the intervention period were used to document the level of involvement and feedback desired from parents and students.

Out of the 120 students at Site A, 13 students were involved in the research process. Both the parent and student surveys included five similar questions with four possible responses regarding grade-reporting procedures (Appendices A and B). An overview of the results is shown in figures one and two.

Of the 13 parent surveys (Figure 1), 100% agreed that music is important for a child's development. However, opinions vary on the way that student progress and feedback is reported. Researchers noted that most participants did not indicate strong feelings either way on whether their child should receive a letter grade. On the other hand, most participants do agree that a grade or report is necessary. Six participants strongly agree that a report without a letter grade should be given.

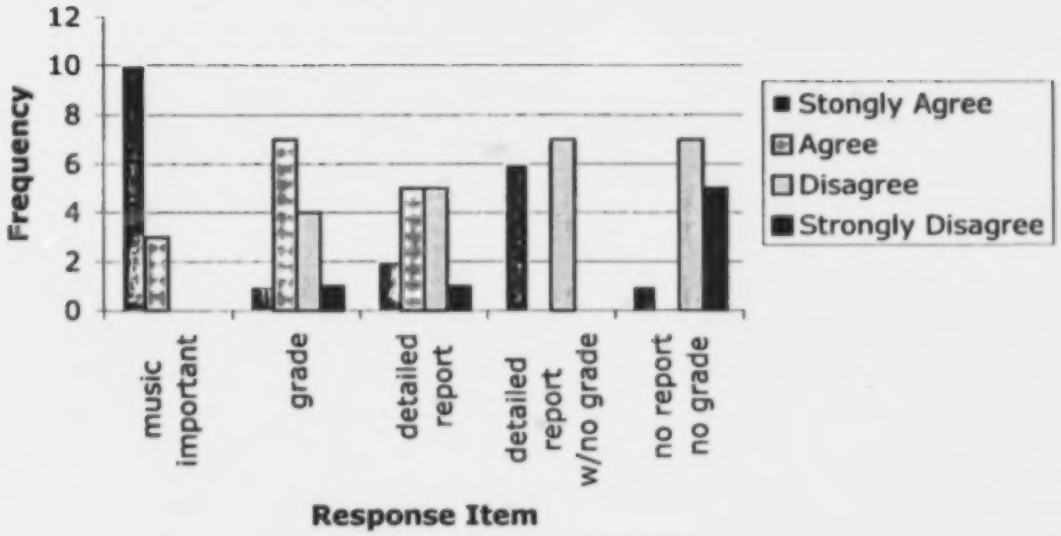

Figure 1. Frequency, response item, and level of agreement for parents' self-report of perceptions about assessment.

It seems the majority of those surveyed preferred to receive a report without a letter grade in addition to concert performances. With these results we can accurately say that establishing some sort of grade reporting procedure to inform parents of student progress is necessary.

Thirteen students were given a similar survey to document their opinions regarding grade-reporting procedures. Of the 13 students surveyed (Figure 2), 100% agreed that a good way to show improvement and progress is to record individual performances on a cassette tape. These results were expected because students enjoy having the opportunity to record themselves and reflect upon their individual performances during small group lessons. Composition was another interesting element on the student survey. As a less familiar activity, composition was not as strongly valued as individual recordings. Overall, students seem to value both forms of authentic assessment procedures.

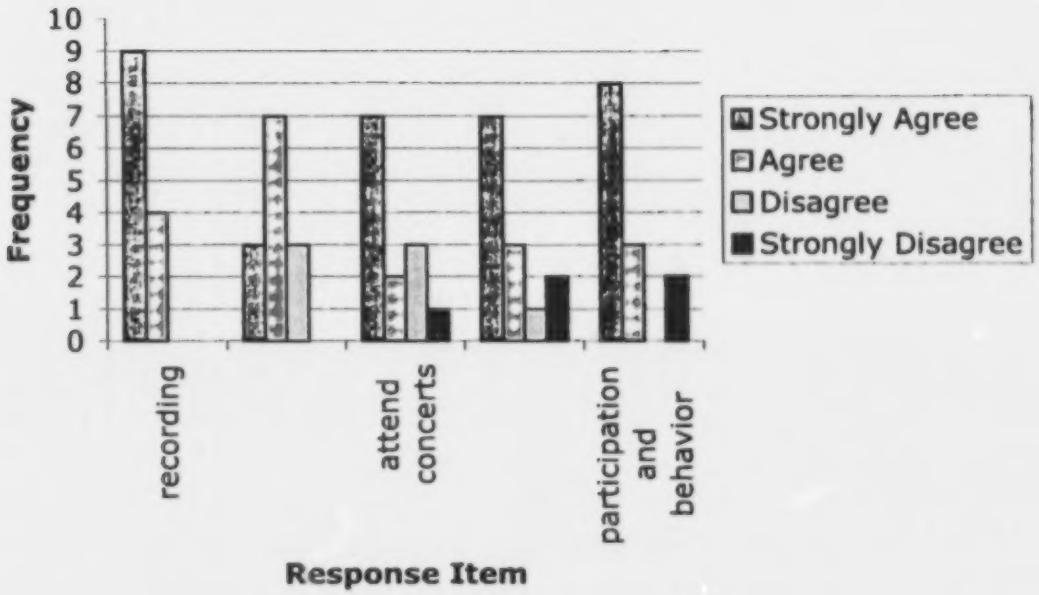

Figure 2. Frequency, response item, and level of agreement for students' self-report of perceptions about assessment.

The majority of students surveyed seemed to have a liking for a letter grade. This insinuates that students use the letter grade as a tool to gauge their progress and reassure themselves of individual success or failure. However, the student survey did not offer the participants a choice to differentiate between receiving a letter grade or simply receiving a report without a letter grade. Researchers could interpret the results in more detail if this information would have been included in the student survey.

Researchers noted a conflict of interest when students seemed to prefer a letter grade, yet also agreed that concert performances demonstrate personal growth and progress sufficiently. Students may have misunderstood the statement that "concerts [are] *enough* to demonstrate personal growth and progress." The statement could be interpreted as "concerts are *necessary* to

show personal growth and progress." Researchers intended to phrase the statement so the participants would acknowledge that a grading system would be unnecessary if concert performances would suffice to show progress and understanding.

With these results we can accurately say that parents and students desire some sort of grade reporting procedure. In summary, parents and students seem to desire a more thorough progress report than listening to group performances at three to five concerts each year. Researchers at Site A and Site B agree that assessment procedures may be implemented and should undergo several revisions as an ongoing process.

Probable Causes

The researchers conducted a review of literature on the current trend towards authentic assessment practices in the music classroom. Much of the research provided accountability as being the primary reason for this new focus, as well as class size and time restraints for the reason why some music teachers find it difficult to apply these new assessment methods.

Music teachers are being held more accountable for the content of their subject area and the teaching and assessment methods they use in their classrooms. Lenzini (1999) reported that if the band sounded good at their concert and the parents raved about the program, the principal assumed that the students were succeeding in band. Today, teachers are asked to provide clearer evidence of student learning. When standardized test scores dropped and costs for education increased the public wanted to be more aware of the students' achievement in all subject areas, including music (Farr & Tone, 1998).

In the last decade, assessment has become an important part in the restructured school. According to Brophy (2000), the new standards and academic expectations of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries require new and more thorough measures of progress record

keeping and reporting. With the increase of the significance of standardized testing came the start of authentic assessment (Burke, 1999). Lehman (1997) stated that many schools are abandoning the traditional letter grade and providing another form of assessment that is clearer and more precise.

The researchers have observed that a formal grading system using authentic assessment is necessary for documenting the achievement of a growing number of music students in their district. Teachers who used to teach solely in one school are finding themselves teaching at multiple sites, and often with a more demanding schedule. As a result, finding appropriate ways of assessing students is challenging. As more emphasis is placed on authentic assessment methods within the district, factors such as time and class size influence the decisions of some music teachers to stray away from detailed assessment.

Researchers suggest that often the most difficult problem of assessment is time (see for example Leman, 1997). Some teachers find that they do not see students long enough to adequately assess progress. Most band and general music teachers have a schedule that is similar to the researchers schedule that inhibits them to see their students for only 30 minutes at a time. One can certainly see why music teachers are continually searching for new and innovative ways of incorporating a formal grading system into their music program.

Developing assessment methods take time and can be a challenge for music teachers (Brasher, 1999). Many factors must be considered, and a single method of assessment will not be appropriate for all classes. One factor is the type of music class (i.e. general music, orchestra, band, or chorus). One has to also consider the size of the class, the age and musical experience of each student, the time available, and any individual state or local requirements.

Another factor that makes assessment difficult is the large number of students that some music teachers have (Leman, 1997). Teachers lack the time to become familiar with the work of each student. The researcher at Site A has difficulty finding time to listen to each student play a small song from their book because the lesson group size usually consists of about eight students. Eight students may not seem like a lot, but when one factors in appropriate time for teaching new notes and concepts from the book, it leaves the teacher with little time for assessment.

Music teachers are more accountable today, yet still struggle with factors such as time and class size. Given that the music teacher has to take all of these considerations into account, many school districts are still in the process of developing assessment methods that will apply to their music classes (Brasher, 1999).

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Developing a new grading system that uses authentic assessment does not have to be a struggle. As defined by Brophy (2000) authentic assessment allows teachers to gauge the progress of their students while they are involved in a knowledge-seeking activity. While music teachers have a challenging time finding time to assess every student, many may be willing to tolerate these inconveniences if their view of assessment changes.

Researchers suggest that authentic assessment, sometimes referred to as alternative assessment, includes procedures and techniques that can be used within the context of instruction, and can be easily incorporated into the daily activities of the school or classroom (Tannenbaum, 1996). According to Tannenbaum teachers do not need to set aside extra time to assess large numbers of students because authentic assessment can be done during their instructional time.

The emergence of authentic assessment began with the increase in the significance of standardized testing (Burke, 1999). Recently, there has been controversy over the significance of standardized testing. Arguments have been made that standardized tests do not accurately reflect student achievement and do not measure the growth and development of a child. Even though

the press and public focus on standardized test scores, most educators are aware that teacher-made tests play a much bigger role in the daily assessment process. Alternative assessments such as portfolios, case studies, conferences, and student writing provide far richer data than standardized tests (Adkison, 2001).

If teachers create their own performance assessments, they can help assure that it is authentic and will match their students' backgrounds, interests, and needs (Farr & Tone, 1998). For example, if a band teacher wants to evaluate how a student is properly articulating a note, the teacher would not give the child a paper pencil test and ask them to circle the correct articulation syllable. The teacher would want to match the child's need and interest by having him/her play a small excerpt from their book. Brasher (1999) provided an example of authenticity when she explains that the ability to play the recorder should be assessed by having the student play the recorder, not by having the student answer test questions concerning fingerings, hand position, articulation, and note-reading. According to Brasher (1999), "the assessment must reflect the essential nature of the knowledge or skill being assessed" (p.30). In response to this statement, one question remains. How can music teachers use authentic assessment procedures in their classrooms and still have time to teach?

One solution for the lack of time for assessment could be for the teacher to move around the room with a clipboard, and he or she can quickly put a check mark along a rating scale to indicate the performance of each student (Lehman, 1997). Simply stated, checklists are a yes or no proposition. Either a student does or does not exhibit a particular skill. A three-point scale is often used on a checklist where a minus equals poor work, a check mark equals satisfactory work, and a plus sign equals outstanding work (Chiodo, 2001).

A checklist can also be used to check if a student is coming prepared for class. The researcher from Site A believes that it is important for students to come to their band lessons with their instrument, book, and pencil. The researcher also finds attendance as being a problem because the students often forget that it is their band lesson day. It is enough of a problem that the teacher researcher feels that attendance should be a large part of their grade. By creating a checklist that includes attendance, instrument, book, and pencil, the teacher can quickly check off whether a student has these items and is coming prepared for class. This process can be completed as the students are coming in the door so that it doesn't interfere with instructional time.

The procedures explained above are perfect examples of what professionals call performance-based assessments. According to Brualdi (1998) performance-based assessments are tasks that are meaningful and engaging to the students. Teachers can integrate performance-based assessments into the instructional process to provide additional learning experiences for students. These types of assessment procedures sometime call for an assessment method that is more elaborate than a checklist and lists elements that students need to include in their work or performance in order to receive a particular grade or evaluation. What is needed here is a rubric; a set of scoring guidelines used to evaluate student work (Whitcomb, 1999). Rubrics allow teachers to fairly and accurately evaluate the student's work while offering parents a clear view of how assessment and instruction go hand in hand (O'Neil, 1996). Where and when a scoring rubric is used does not depend on the grade level or subject, but rather on the purpose of the assessment (Moskal, 2000).

Due to the emphasis that the National Standard for Music Education placed on comprehensive music instruction, composition plays a larger role in music classrooms today

(Hickey, 1999). Composition assignments and exercises are an excellent authentic activities that assess whether or not a student understands the musical elements that go into creating a piece of music. Music teachers who have implemented composition practices into their classrooms know that difficulty lies in the area of assessment. Creating a rubric for composition takes time and careful planning. However, Hickey continues to add that composing does not always need to be a graded activity. Composition should be an ongoing activity in the classroom that provides the opportunity for students to experiment with musical sound and learn how it can be manipulated to create something that is pleasant to the composer's ear.

Another solution to creating time for authentic assessment in the music classroom is to incorporate technology into the instruction and evaluation process. Specifically, videotapes can be powerful assessment tools (Carlin, 1996). Carlin states that through videotape the student being assessed has a record of all their actions, words, and sounds. The student is then able to view their performance over and over again. Videotapes also give students and teacher the chance to reflect, analyze, and even edit the tape for multiple learning purposes.

Berg and Smith (1996), both music educators, are strong supporters of using videotape in the classroom. Even with the obvious advantages of this technology educators are still very aware that the videotape has some limitations. One of the first concerns that teachers might have is the impact of the camera in the classroom. Researchers have found that students will react differently when the camera is first placed in the classroom. Yet, after a short period of time, both students and teachers tend to forget that the camera is there and go about their usual tasks. However, that same study proved that videotaping can be a nuisance in other ways. Setting up the video equipment can delay the start of class and can also be a time-consuming task.

Considering this, Burrack (2002) suggested that students should also assess themselves

through the use of tape recordings, which enable them to authentically assess their performance. A fifth grade student can easily be taught how to record their voice or instrument on an audiotape, and then use the tape later for self-assessment purposes. According to Wells (1998) there are numerous benefits to getting students involved in assessing their own work. Self-assessments give students ownership of their own learning and offer them the means to evaluate their own growth and set goals for themselves. Likewise, Farr and Tone (1998) noted that in order for a student to improve in anything they do, he or she must be able to see the need for improvement. The student must be able to self assess and identify the strengths and weaknesses of their work.

Teachers can use two approaches when designing student self-assessment tasks: directed critiques and open-ended critiques (Wells, 1998). In directed critiques the student is given specific performance dimensions for their assessment. Wells further explains by stating that in a directed critique the student would be asked to focus on rhythm, intonation, and dynamics when assessing them self. In open-ended critiques, the student is free to choose their own performance dimensions.

Designing student self-assessment tasks can be expanded to include group assessments. For example, a band can assess the ensemble as a whole, and even determine what type of marking the particular performance deserved. The group assessment is a great tool to use after a concert or performance when band teachers and students are often ready for a change of pace. Self and group assessments are known to enhance musical understanding, aesthetic sensitivity, and critical-listening skills. They are the perfect tools for authentic assessment.

Most likely, when a person thinks of the activities and procedures that happen in a band, choir, and orchestra class they think of preparation for concerts and performances. Performances

should be a major part of what ensembles do, but these activities should not serve as the goal of the music program. Performances should be the natural result of the skills taught in the classroom (Dunlap, 1993). So what should be going on in the music classroom? When conducting extensive research on this subject most of the literature focused on the importance of a portfolio system in the music classroom, whether it be band, choir, orchestra, or general music. Grace (1992) defined a portfolio system as being a record of a child's process of learning. It shows what the child has learned and how he/she has gone about learning. It shows how the student thinks, questions, analyzes, synthesizes, produces, and creates. Information is also gathered about how he/she interacts intellectually, emotionally and socially with others.

According to Arter (1995) it is important to keep in mind that there are really only two basic reasons for doing portfolios: assessment or instruction. Assessment is used for keeping track of what students know and can do. Instructional is used to promote learning. Portfolio systems that have assessment as the primary purpose tend to be more structured (there is more uniformity as to the items that are placed in the portfolio and the times at which they are entered). Portfolios that are used for instruction tend to belong more to the student and be less structured.

Lavender (2000) offered a list of items that may be found in a music portfolio:

- assignments, tests, quizzes, compositions, notes, etc.
- teacher observations and comments
- student reflections
- journal writings
- interviews, surveys or questionnaires (p. 31).

In most cases, both teachers and students select the items to be included in the final portfolio (Burke, 1999). If students were the only ones choosing the items for their portfolio they would probably select their best work or favorite pieces. According to Burke, items wouldn't necessarily provide an accurate picture of the child's learning. The teacher should always select a few items that show evidence that the student met school goals or standards and understand the basic concepts taught.

Finally, parental interest in the music program is further encouraged when parents are invited to view the music portfolios that their children have developed (Brophy, 2000). Parents are often limited to viewing the results of music instruction through school performances. The portfolio provides a new avenue through which they can view evidence of their child's total musical instruction and growth.

Gardner (1993), and the creator of the multiple intelligences theory, supported the idea of using student portfolios. Gardner stated that portfolios are an excellent exemplar of distributed intelligence. Through his research he has located seven intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligence. Burke (1999) also supported the use of multiple intelligences and explained that teachers can incorporate the theory into daily instruction by developing a repertoire of assessment tools to evaluate projects and performances from a multiple intelligences perspective. Likewise, Gardner (1993) stated that, "assessments should be intelligence-fair, that is capable of engaging specific competences without the need to rely on linguistic or logical means" (p# 246).

According to Gardner (1993), all seven intelligences are needed to productively function in society. The Multiple Intelligences theory differs greatly from the traditional education systems where the emphasis was usually placed on the development and use of verbal and

mathematical intelligences (Brualdi, 1996). If teachers truly accept Gardner's theory they are saying that they view each of the seven intelligences as being equally important.

When introducing new material to students, teachers should structure their presentation of the material in a style, which engages most or all of the intelligences (Brualdi, 1996). Brualdi provided an example of how this can be done by showing how a teacher can present information to his/her students about the revolutionary war. A teacher can show students battle maps, play revolutionary war songs, organize a role-play of signing of the Declaration of Independence, and have the students read a novel about life during that period. Not only is this type of instruction exciting for the students, but it also gives students a deeper understanding of the subject material.

A well-developed grading system should include the multiple intelligences theory as well as incorporate the many authentic assessment strategies suggested by the literature. When music educators hear the terms *authentic, portfolio, rubrics,* and *assessment* the initial response can range from excitement to despair. The volume of materials relating to these topics are monumental, but if educators begin by slowly and methodically examining one aspect of assessment at a time, they will find themselves successful in creating a better grading system that functions well for both themselves and their students (Eppink, 2002).

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of developing authentic assessment methods from a multiple intelligences perspective during the period of August through December 2002, the teachers of the targeted fifth grade music classes will implement a successful assessment program. In order to accomplish the project objective, the following processes are necessary.

The teachers will incorporate multiple intelligences into lesson plans and instruction. The use of videotapes, the implementation of a composition project, and the development of a

portfolio system will provide a variety of learning styles for the students.

The portfolio system will be designed by the teachers to engage students in self-assessment activities. Audio tape recordings of student performances, self-reflection, and concert reflections will be part of the assessment process.

The teachers will develop a grade reporting system that reflects authentic assessment. Checklists will be created to document whether or not the students come to class prepared with all materials and have completed their weekly assignment. Also, a scoring rubric will accompany the composition project as an authentic assessment tool.

Project Action Plan

The following action plan was used throughout the project to guide the researchers in their day-to-day goals and activities. It is organized chronologically with the understanding that the teacher reflection logs were completed on a weekly basis.

- Administered Parent Survey by mail
- Completed weekly Teacher Reflection Log (Form A)
- Distributed Student Portfolio materials and explain procedures
- Teacher explained procedures for the weekly Assignment Checklist
- Teacher implemented the weekly Assignment Checklist
- Students recorded their first individual performance on audio cassette tapes
- Students completed the Performance Critique for the previous week's recording
- Created lesson plans for the Composition Project
- Implemented and administer the Composition Project
- Students recorded their second individual performance on audio cassette tapes
- Students completed the Performance Critique for the previous week's recording

- Recorded first concert on video tape
- Students participated in an informal Concert Reflection of the first concert
- Students participated in a role playing activity and conduct an informal Peer Evaluation
- Recorded second concert on video tape
- Showed concert video to the large ensemble while students completed a written Concert Reflection
- The teacher prepared Report Cards for 3rd and 4th quarter

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, surveys, teacher reflection logs, and student anecdotal records were used throughout the intervention period.

The Parent Survey (Appendix A) included five questions each with four possible responses. The survey was administered to 13 parents in the month of September. The researchers mailed the surveys to parents along with a cover letter providing an overview of the project. In addition, parents received a letter of agreement for informed consent. Parents participated on a volunteer basis and were instructed to complete the survey and consent form. To protect confidentiality, the parents returned the surveys in a sealed envelope along with the letter of agreement. The information was separated and stored in a locked file cabinet located in the researchers' classrooms. The Parent Survey was used to determine whether parents desire a traditional method of assessment or an authentic method of assessment for their child.

The Student Survey (Appendix B) included five questions each with four possible responses. The survey was administered to 13 students during class. To ensure confidentiality, the students were instructed to omit any names. The completed surveys were sealed in an

envelope and collected by the teacher to be stored in a locked file cabinet. The Student Survey is designed to determine whether students desire a traditional method of assessment or an authentic method of assessment.

During the months of September through December, the teachers completed two methods of observation: teacher reflection logs (Appendix C and D) and student anecdotal records. The Teacher Reflection Log (Appendix C, Form A) was completed by the teachers on a weekly basis. Teacher Reflection Log (Appendix D, Form B) was completed *after* an intervention had been implemented. Form A was used to reflect on the strengths, weaknesses, and possible changes to the assessment procedures. The purpose of Form B was for teachers to reflect upon their intervention.

Anecdotal records (Appendix E) were documented for the students' progress and their reactions to teacher interventions on a weekly basis. To protect confidentiality, the information gathered from both methods of observations was stored in a locked file cabinet located in the teachers' classrooms.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The research project was specifically designed to establish and/or improve methods of assessment and procedures for providing feedback to parents on students' performance. The intervention included a formal grading system using authentic assessments that were based on a multiple intelligences perspective.

The use of multiple intelligences was incorporated into the teacher's lesson plans and instruction as an alternative approach in delivering the subject content matter. Based on the multiple intelligences perspective, the three key components used by the teacher were the use of student portfolios, a composition project, and concert reflections.

The students created a portfolio as part of the multiple intelligences approach. A Ziploc bag was stapled to the inside of a manila folder to hold each student's personal audiocassette tape. Names were written on the tapes and labels were printed for the folders. All portfolio folders were arranged in alphabetical order and stored in a file cabinet in the classroom. The portfolio system was designed to engage students in self-assessment activities and included two tape recordings of student performances, two self-reflections of the tape recordings, and one concert reflection. The portfolios were also used as an assessment tool for grade reporting.

After recording individual performances, the students completed a performance critique sheet (Appendix G). Each student entered the designated recording room and recorded a given song from their band method book. At their following lesson, students returned to the recording room to listen and reflect upon their taped performance.

Peer evaluation also provided feedback to the student on individual performances. However, reflection sheets were not used for peer evaluations. During group lessons, the students played a song in front of their peers. The students were asked to provide feedback about individual performances in a helpful and positive manner. Upon further reflection, both researchers anticipated the potential danger of hurt feelings. As a result, the students were reminded to give positive feedback, as well as feedback that could improve a student's performance.

In order to reinforce the students' knowledge of music notation and vocabulary, a composition project was assigned. The project provided an opportunity to display creativity while incorporating a range of different learning styles and intelligences into the content delivery and instruction. During the students' usual lesson time, the teacher gave an in-depth explanation of the composition project. The students received a rubric, which stated the project expectations and grading procedures for the composition. Within one week of the assignment, students performed their composition for the teacher and the lesson group. Using the rubric (Appendix F), the teacher graded each composition and held a brief conference with each student.

Incorporating videotape was a useful tool designed to allow the students to use their intrapersonal intelligence by reflecting on two concert performances. The teacher asked a parent to videotape each concert performance. At the rehearsal following each performance, the students reflected upon their performance while viewing the videotape.

For the first concert reflection, the teacher intended to show the videotape but later realized there would be insufficient time. Instead, the teacher asked the students to reflect without the videotape and write two or more sentences about the performance. The teacher guided the students to reflect upon specific musical concepts rather than rating the overall performance as good or bad. For example, the students were asked to reflect upon the ensemble's ability to produce a good tone, follow tempo, and read notes and rhythms accurately.

For the second concert reflection, the students wrote down comments on their reflection sheet while viewing the video. Again, the teacher prompted the students to reflect on specific musical concepts. The main purpose of the reflection activity was to reinforce the students' knowledge of performance concepts.

An imperative component of the intervention was the development and implementation of a checklist (Appendix H). The teacher managed the checklist on a weekly basis as an authentic method to check for attendance, citizenship, and the presence of their instrument and book. The information from the checklist will be used in the grade report and ultimately will help to determine the student's final grade each quarter.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

Surveys, teacher reflection logs, and anecdotal records were used to assess the affects of authentic assessment methods in the fifth grade band setting. The authentic assessment methods implemented and analyzed in this study included grade reports and checklists, and the use of multiple intelligences into lesson plans and instruction, such as student portfolios, a composition project, and videotape reflections on concert performances.

The student and parent surveys given prior to the interventions were used to document the extent of the problem and to help influence the type of intervention used in the study. Due to

a high percentage of parent and student interest in having a progress report, the researchers intervened by creating a detailed grade report (Appendix I). Although the grade report has not yet been implemented, student and parent surveys suggest that a grade report could be successful and beneficial to the band program.

As described in the teacher reflection logs, the implementation of the checklist was a highly effective means of monitoring student accountability. The checklist was reproduced for each student and organized in a three-ring binder. The checklist also had a simple design and allowed for quick, efficient record keeping during lessons.

The most time-consuming part of the checklist process was organizing the database. The 120 minutes shown in Table 1 was the time it took for a teacher, already familiar with organizing and creating spreadsheets, to organize the database. Once the preparations of the checklist have been made, maintaining the checklist takes little to no time at all. When students walked in the door the teacher immediately began the checklist process. By the time all students had their instruments together the teacher had already checked for attendance, instrument, and book. Checking for citizenship was done quickly and discretely throughout the lesson.

Table 1

Time Needed to Organize the Database, Print Checklist, Organize into Binder, and Maintain the Checklist for Monitoring Student Accountability

Checklist Process	Time Needed
Organize database	120 min.
Print checklist sheets	10 min.
Organize into binder	20 min.
Maintain checklist	< 1 min. per lesson group

The details of the checklist indirectly influenced each student's grade or rating in the grade report. Also, the checklist details assisted in discussions or informal conferences with parents and students. The teacher recorded attendance, preparation, and citizenship each week.

The following three marks were used on the checklist to indicate good, fair, and poor marks respectively: " /," "X," and "■." For example, a student may have disrupted the class once and received a fair mark for citizenship on the checklist. If a student disrupted the class twice in the same lesson, that student received a poor mark for citizenship as a consequence. Two fair marks were considered as the equivalent of one poor mark.

Table 2

Frequency of Students' Attendance, Instrument, Music, and Citizenship During the Monitoring of Student Accountability in a 9-week Period

Student	Attendance	Instrument	Music	Citizenship
A	8	8	8	8
B	9	9	9	8
C	8	7	8	8
D	8	8	8	8
E	8	7	6	8
F	9	8	9	9
G	9	9	9	9
H	9	9	9	9
I	8	8	8	8
J	6	5	6	5
K	8	8	8	8
L	3	3	3	3
M	4	4	4	4

Through further analysis of the checklist, a wide range of student accountability was evident. There were several close connections between the four categories listed in Table 2. The researchers expected that if a student is not present, then neither is their instrument nor their book. An absence would result in lower marks across the table. As expected, the marks

following the attendance column are equal to or less than the attendance record. Similarly, some students who forgot to bring their instrument also forgot to bring their music. On the contrary, the table indicates that the opposite is true for Students C, F, and J. Ultimately, the checklist helped to report the trends and behavioral patterns of the students back to their parents and teacher.

Anecdotal records from students confirmed the desire for and effectiveness of recording individual performances on audiotape. The results of the survey stated that a majority of the students felt that this authentic assessment procedure was a good way to show improvement and progress. Furthermore, the performance critique sheets indicated that most students accurately described their tone, dynamics, tempo, and other elements of their performance. Eleven of the 13 students described their performance similarly to how the teacher described the performance recorded on the audiotape.

Peer reflections were another element that the researchers would like to have included in the students' portfolios. Due to lack of time, peer reflections could not be formally implemented using a peer reflection sheet. Instead, the teacher had the students provide verbal feedback to their peer's performance while in their lesson groups. Students provided helpful advice to each other and were able to relate to one another while keeping a positive classroom environment. Furthermore, the researchers documented three of the 13 students' comments regarding mistakes from past performances. At their next performance in class, most of the students were more aware of their past mistakes and tried to make improvements in those areas.

The results of the student survey indicated that many students favored composition as a method of assessment. Similarly, anecdotal records showed the students responding in a favorable manner toward the composition project. At first, some students had a disposition

toward the homework assignment. After further explanation of the composition project, the students were more excited about the idea of creating their own song, creating unusual titles for their composition, and performing for their classmates. When students returned to class the next week, four of them had their assignment completed and were very pleased with the results. The other nine students needed more time and encouragement to get started on their composition.

Concert reflection through the use of videotape was another area where anecdotal records and teacher reflection logs were used to document the success of the intervention. During the first concert reflection, the teacher asked the students to give verbal feedback about their concert performance. Students were documented saying, "I think the flutes were awesome!" or "I thought we did good on our last song." To obtain more thoughtful reflections, the teacher prompted the students to verbally explain why. Most of the students remained silent and could not answer the question in response to the teacher's prompting.

The teacher instructed the students to view the videotape as they completed the second concert reflection. Before writing their responses, the teacher gave the students examples of specific considerations for reflection. Teacher reflection logs confirmed that the teacher was disappointed in the lack of thoughtfulness portrayed.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Through the use of surveys, reflection logs, and anecdotal records, the researchers concluded that the creation of an assessment program is a useful tool for students, parents, and teachers. The original focus of the project was to provide feedback to parents regarding students' performance through authentic assessment procedures. Indeed, the implementation of the grade reporting system, which included a checklist and a grade report, was successful based upon the teacher's ability to manage the procedures in lieu of the time constraints and large class size.

Through the implementation of weekly checklists, the students understood the teacher's expectations and were able to portray those expectations to their parents. Not all teachers will be comfortable using spreadsheets and sophisticated computer programs to manage information and records of their students' performance. No matter how the information is managed, the researcher's concluded that some form of grading system is essential. Through informal conversations with parents and administrators about these new assessment procedures, it is evident that the band program has more credibility and stature.

The students experienced several activities that involved listening and reflection through the implementation of the multiple intelligences approach. The end result of the multiple intelligences approach displayed a sense of heightened awareness in the students' ability to accurately critique individual performance and the performances of others.

In order to accommodate the recordings of individual student performances, the teacher from Site A had the advantage of extra classroom space. Without additional classroom space, teachers may adapt the reflection activities. The focus may be directed toward peer reflections rather than individual reflections to eliminate the need for extra recording space. As another

alternative for completing reflections, the teacher may encourage the students to record themselves at home.

Both researchers believe the videotape-reflection activity has potential for students to authentically assess their performance as a full band. However, the reflection activity did not reach it's full potential in the duration of this project. The researchers suggested the students' simple comments during the first reflection resulted from the teachers' inability to show the videotape during class. Also, the researcher at Site A suggested the students' vague comments during the second concert reflection were partially due to the students' inexperience in listening to a full-band piece with a critical ear. In addition, the researcher at Site B suggested the students might have experienced pressure to complete the reflection process during the limited time provided.

The researchers noted that having students reflect on full-band performances is substantially different than reflecting on a solo piece. Overall, thoughtful reflections on the full-band performances were more difficult for the students than reflecting on individual audiotaped performances. The researchers recommend that the teacher allow more time in between concerts for the concert reflections. This will allow more time for the teacher to introduce, reinforce, and model concert reflections consistently.

Along with allowing more time for concert reflections, the researchers recommend allowing students two weeks rather than one week to complete their composition project. After the assignment was given, many students returned the next week with more questions about the project. Also, in order to encourage the students to turn their composition in on time, one may want to include timeliness as part of the rubric. With careful scheduling, the addition of

composition to classroom instruction can be done successfully, and be utilized as a very useful authentic assessment method.

In order to successfully implement the portfolio system into the band program, the use of portfolios should be an ongoing process. The portfolios used at Site A could have included more elements, such as the concert reflections and the composition project. Ultimately, the materials included in the student portfolios are under the discretion of the individual teacher. Ideally, the portfolios could travel with the student throughout all of his/her years in the band program, which requires support of the other band directors throughout the school district. The use of the portfolio system is being strongly considered by the colleagues in the teacher's school district.

Indeed, the implementation of student portfolios within instructional time was successful. Using these portfolios as a formal means of communication between students and parents would be the next step in the portfolio process. One possibility would be to have the students share their portfolios with their parents before, during, or after a concert performance.

Overall, the teacher researchers considered the study to be successful. With a few minor changes the action research could have reached an even higher level of success. The researchers recommend encouraging a larger number of students and parents to participate in the study. Surprisingly, many parents did not respond to the informational letter sent to them at the beginning of the school year and then again a few weeks later into the school year. Out of the thirty parents and students asked to participate, only 13 agreed to participate. Also, in order to improve the analysis of the data, the parent surveys should have contained questions that related more closely to the questions in the student survey. Having similarly stated questions would have helped compare the student and parent responses more accurately.

Due to the fact that all teachers are being held more accountable for national, state, and local standards, their focus should be to effectively teach and assess these goals and objectives to a large number of students in the small time provided. Rather than implementing several new procedures at once, the teacher researchers' experience led them to the conclusion that small, achievable goals should be set and attained. Time and class size do not have to be heavy burdens on music teachers. Providing thorough feedback to students and parents can be possible through the careful planning and implementation of authentic assessment practices in the classroom.

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Appendix A

Parent Survey

Circle one response for each of the following items *as they relate to band.*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I believe music is important for my child's development.	1	2	3	4
2. I believe that my child should receive a grade for their progress.	1	2	3	4
3. I believe that my child should receive *both* a grade *and* a detailed report about their progress.	1	2	3	4
4. I believe that my child should receive *only* a detailed report about their progress *without* a grade.	1	2	3	4
5. I believe that *neither* a grade *nor* a report is necessary; my child's school performances are sufficient to show their progress.	1	2	3	4

Appendix B

Student Survey

Circle *one* response for each of the following items as they relate to band.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I believe that *recording myself* on a cassette tape is a good way to show improvement and progress.	1	2	3	4
2. I believe that *composing music* should be a part of beginning band.	1	2	3	4
3. I believe that *attending concerts* is enough to demonstrate personal growth and progress.	1	2	3	4
4. I believe that I should receive a letter grade in band.	1	2	3	4
5. I believe that my grade should reflect participation and behavior.	1	2	3	4

Appendix C

Teacher Reflection Log

Form A

Date: _____

☐ Site A ☐ Site B

Strengths: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Weaknesses: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Possible Changes: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D

Teacher Reflection Log

Form B

Date: _____

☐ Site A ☐ Site B

Reflections of the Intervention: _____

Appendix E

Anecdotal Records

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

NAME: _____

RECORD: _____

_____

_____

_____

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

NAME: _____

RECORD: _____

_____

_____

_____

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

NAME: _____

RECORD: _____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix F

Composition Rubric

Name_____ Instrument_____

1. The piece is at least 8 measures long.

   2 = yes
   1 = no

2. The piece is in an approved meter.

   2 = yes
   1 = no

3. The melody contains notes already learned by the performer.

   2 = yes
   1 = no

4. The rhythms are appropriate and playable.

   2 = yes
   1 = no

5. At least one dynamic marking is included.

   2 = yes
   1 = no

Grading Scale:
20-19 = A
18-17 = B
16-15 = C
14-13 = D
12-below = F

6. The composition has a title.

   2 = yes
   1 = no

7. The composition is neat, complete, and correctly notated.

   4 = notation is perfect and the piece is neat
   3 = notation is mostly correct and the piece is neat
   2 = notation is inconsistent and the piece is messy
   1 = notation is mostly incorrect and sloppy, and the piece is messy

8. The piece is performed with accuracy and expression

   4 = The piece is performed with accuracy and expression.
   3 = The piece is mostly performed with accuracy and expression.
   2 = The piece is performed with many mistakes and is without expression.
   1 = The piece is not performed as written.

Final Grade_____

Appendix G

Performance Critique Sheet

Name_____ Instrument_____

Here are some things that I noticed about my *tone*.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Here are some things that I noticed about my *rhythm* (counting).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix H

Teacher Checklist

ROOM #100: MISS JONES (5JD)
LESSONS: TUESDAYS @ SEE TIMES BELOW
FULL BAND: TUESDAYS @ 11:45 - 12:15

LAST, FIRST NAME
CLARINET, GROUP 8
BLUE BAND

WEEK	TUESDAYS	TIME	#1	#2	#3	#4	ACHIEVEMENT	NOTES
1	8/27/02	9:45	☐	☐	☐	☐		
2	9/3/02	10:15	☐	☐	☐	☐		
3	9/10/02	10:45	☐	☐	☐	☐		
4	9/17/02	12:45	☐	☐	☐	☐		
5	9/24/02	1:15	☐	☐	☐	☐		
6	10/1/02	1:45	☐	☐	☐	☐		
7	10/8/02	2:15	☐	☐	☐	☐		
8	10/15/02	8:45	☐	☐	☐	☐		
9	10/22/02	9:15	☐	☐	☐	☐		
10	10/29/02	9:45	☐	☐	☐	☐		
11	11/5/02	10:15	☐	☐	☐	☐		
12	11/12/02	10:45	☐	☐	☐	☐		
13	11/19/02	12:45	☐	☐	☐	☐		
14	11/26/02	1:15	☐	☐	☐	☐		
15	12/3/02	1:45	☐	☐	☐	☐		
16	12/10/02	2:15	☐	☐	☐	☐		
17	12/17/02	8:45	☐	☐	☐	☐		

#1: Attendance #2: Instrument #3: Book/Music #4: Citizenship 6324-5D

Grade Report

CLARINET — INSTRUMENT

LAST, FIRST — STUDENT'S NAME

BAND GRADES – 2ND QUARTER

Five points may be earned in each of the eight areas of musicianship listed below. Students receive a rating based upon the total number of points earned. Rather than assigning letter grades, the rating and scores reflect personal achievement and musical development through the band program. This grading system for is similar to solo and ensemble festivals in which students may participate for the next several years.

TOTAL SCORE: 40

I

RATING

DIVISIONAL RATING		TOTAL POINTS
I	Superior	36-40
II	Excellent	28-35
III	Good	20-27
IV	Fair	12-19
V	Poor	8-11

AREAS OF MUSICIANSHIP

NOTE READING — SCORE: 5	RHYTHM COUNTING — SCORE: 5
Accuracy of Printed Pitches	Note & Rest Values (Accuracy)
Matching Pitch (Tuning)	Duration
Controlling Pitch (Intonation)	Pulse
Solfege Syllables & Hand Signs	Steadiness
Key Signatures & Accidentals	Correctness of Meters
TONE QUALITY — SCORE: 5	**TECHNIQUE & ACHIEVEMENT — SCORE: 5**
Resonance	Artistry & Dexterity
Control	Attacks & Releases
Clarity & Focus	Control of Ranges
Consistency	Musical / Mechanical Skills
Warmth	Achievement Lines (up to #98)
ARTICULATIONS — SCORE: 5	**SIGNS, SYMBOLS, & VOCAB. — SCORE: 5**
Tonguing (Perc: Sticking)	Time Signatures
Slurring	Repeat
Accents	Fermata
Tenuto	Ritardando
Legato	Accelerando
BASICS — SCORE: 5	**INTERPRETATION — SCORE: 5**
Assembly & Maintenance	Tempo
General Conduct & Mannerisms	Phrasing
Poise, Posture, & Hand Position	Dynamics
Embouchure (Perc: Grip)	Style
Breathing & Air Stream	Emotional Involvement

5 – Superior	4 – Excellent	3 – Good	2 – Fair	1 – Poor
Your playing is outstanding in nearly every detail; keep practicing and maintain your good habits; be proud!	Your playing has some minor defects; set goals for achievement and keep mastering your instrument.	Your playing has some problems; practice more to create good habits and work out the problems.	Your playing has basic weaknesses; go back to the basics and learn more about your instrument.	Your playing is unsatisfactory; reconsider the commitment to play in band and make the right decision for you.

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